

## A Methodist circuit rider's horseback tour from Pennsylvania to Wisconsin, 1835 /

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### A METHODIST CIRCUIT RIDER'S HORSEBACK TOUR FROM PENNSYLVANIA TO WISCONSIN, 1835. BY ALFRED BRUNSON, D. D.1

1 Alfred Brunson, D. D., author of this journal, is said to have been "the first Methodist minister who set foot on the soil north of the Wisconsin River." He was born in Danbury, Conn., February 9, 1793. Seven years later the family moved to Sing Sing, N. Y., where the father was drowned in 1806; the mother returned to Danbury with her seven children, and apprenticed Alfred to a shoemaker. But being an inveterate reader, although with little scholastic training, ambition grew in him, and while still a cobbler he studied law. In 1809, having become "awakened" at a Methodist revival, he was licensed as an exhorter. In 1811 he was married, and settled on an Ohio farm. Two years later he entered the army for a year, and was at the taking of Malden and the retaking of Detroit. Returning home, he was, in 1815, licensed to preach, and had long labored successfully in Ohio and Pennsylvania, when he felt called to become a missionary to the Indians on the Upper Mississippi River; and the interesting journal herewith presented is a record of his overland horseback tour from Meadville, Pa., to his new location at Prairie du Chien, Wis. Upon arrival, he was made presiding elder and Indian missionary of a district extending from Rock Island, Ill., to the head of the Mississippi River. In 1839, ill health caused Mr. Brunson to abandon the ministry for a time, and for ten years he held various official positions and practised law; in 1840, we find him in the territorial legislature; in 1842 he was appointed Indian agent at La Pointe, on Lake Superior; in 1850, after a defeat for a judgeship, he returned to the ministry of his church, and two years later became presiding elder of the Prairie du Chien district. For a time, commencing with 1862, he was a chaplain in the Union army, but resigned because of ill health, and finally retired from active labors

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in 1872. His wife had died in 1846. Dr. Brunson was fond of historical research, wrote much for both the secular and the religious press, was the author of numerous articles in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, and published two books: *A Western Pioneer* (Cincinnati, 1872), in two vols., and *Key to the Apocalypse* (Cincinnati, 1881). He died Aug. 3, 1886, in the ninetieth year of his age. His early journals and letter-books are in the possession of this Society. One of his MS. books contains the journal here published, which appears to have been written after the events narrated.— Ed.

*Sept. 9 th 1835* . Having made preparations, I left my family, in Meadville, Pa. and an endearing circle of friends & acquaintances, to go on a Mission to the Indians on the Upper Mississippi, accompanied by Wellington Weigley. Bro. Weigley was one of the young men whom I had introduced into the Ministry, having employed him one year before he was admitted on trial, & he being his 2 d year on trial at this time.

I took the thills from my one horse wagon, and putting a tongue to it, we attached both our horses, took our saddles, bridles, saddle-bags &c. all which made but a light load. He designed to accompany me to the Illinois conf. to which 265 we had both been transfered, & which, was to meet on the 1 st of Oct. ensuing, & as much farther as his appointment would admit of.

To leave home under such circumstances, & with such an object in view, was attended with feelings & reflections of the most solemn character. The distance to the nearest Indians I expected to visit, was about 900 miles, to visit whom, & to select a site for the location of my family, would occupy 5 or 6 months, & cost me about 2000 miles travel; a good part of which must be performed in the dead of winter. Some of this time I must be seperated from all white or civilized society, & the remainder of the time mostly among strangers.

Nature *had* shrunk from the task; but I stood reprov'd. The fur trader, the Indian agent & the Military officer & soldier had went farther for the purposes of commerce, war & worldly

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business; And to think that the Ministers of Religion should be unwilling to brook the difficulties these men do, (for the sake of *money* ,) for the sake of *saving souls* , is enough to cause the blush of shame.

I was also lame, & unable to walk at the time, only with crutches, from an injury I received in the heel a few weeks before. But being inspired by views & feelings, produced, 266 as I trust, by the influence of the Divine Spirit, I moved forward with the elacraty usual to one conscious of being in the path of duty.

We travelled 25 miles between 2 & 8 oclock P.M. And lodged at Bro. Parkers in Kinsman, Ohio. Here we found a gracious work of God in progress, it being the time of a protracted meeting. Some 30 souls had then been at [the] alter, several of whom had found pardon. We left the meeting in progress, tho' much in want of ministerial help. (I did not go to the meeting house myself, on account of my lameness; but Bro. Weigley went tho' we arrived so late, & gave an exhortation, &c.)

The circumstances under which the house in which this meeting was held, was erected, & came into the hands of the Methodists, shows the mysterious ways of Providence. The town of Kinsman, like all others on the Connecticut Western Reserve, is laid off 5 miles square. The roads are usually laid off at right angles, which the levelness of the country admits of to advantage, & the *centre* is the usual site for meeting house, school house &c. There, was, however, a diviation from this, in this town, owing to local circumstances.

M r . Kinsman, the original proprietor of the town, settled 1½ miles south west of the centre, which of course, became the place of business, & centre of social operations. Here the Presbyterians built a large & elegant church, designed for the accomodation of all the members of that church in the town. But a part of them, residing north & east of this point objected to having the house thus one side, & refused to aid in its errection on that site. The friends of this site, however, being more wealthy tho' less numerous than their opponents, succeded in their design.

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Upon this the other party assembled, raised funds & built another house, less spacious than the other, but sufficiently so to accomodate those it was designed for. They found, however, that it was difficult if not impossible to get preacher of their order to serve them. They were considered schismatics, & therefore not to be countinanced.

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Under these circumstances, rather than have *no* preaching, they applied to the Methodist preachers, who, being commissioned to preach the gospel to every human creature, & whether right or wrong about the building of the house, they had souls to save, & were, therefore, objects of our persuite. They were preached to, & soon after a society of near 100 members was raised, & the house was settled upon trustees according to our deed of settlement. And at this time the circuit was so arranged as to give them preaching every Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kinsman is now (1900) a post-village in Trumbull County, Ohio, with four churches, an academy, a chair-factory, and several other small industries; population of the township, in 1890, was 1,029.— Ed.

*Sept. 10 th* . Proceeding on our way, we called at my old friends, W m . Parish, in Hubbard, for dinner. As I expected, Bro. Parish objected seriously to my leaving the country. “Let others, & younger men go,” said he, “but stay you here & take care of the churches you have so long been laboring to build up in the faith of the gospel.” It is certainly much more congeneal to ones feelings to see people regret, rather than rejoice at my going from them. Yet it was painful to my feelings to see *them* afflicted at the course I had taken.

My horse being lame, & showing signs of being unable to perform the journey, I exchanged him for another, giving \$15, to boot. This was the only time I had traded or exchanged horses in *seven* years. And such is my utter aversion to ministers trading in horse flesh, that I should not now have done so, but for the extrem necessary of the case.

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We reached Canfield this night and lodged with Bro. Elihu Warner. I was not long here before I was surrounded by old friends, one of whom, Sister Starr, dandled me upon her knee when I was a babe, in Danbury, conn., more than 42 years ago.

*Sept. 11 th* . Arrived at New Lisbon, stoped at Bro: Corbets. We proposed a Missionary meeting, which was agreed to, on condition we would ask for no money. But 268 as there had never been a meeting of the kind in the place, tho' there was a soc y of over 100 members, & a population of near 3000 souls,<sup>1</sup> I felt disposed to hold one, for the purpose of diffusing the Missionary Spirit, even tho' we got no collection. We found the Spirit of benevolence here, however, & as soon as the cause of Missions & the duty of Christians to support them was spread before their minds, the congregation, tho' small, contributed nobly, for their number & the notice they had received.

<sup>1</sup> New Lisbon, a village (1890) of 2,278 souls (less than credited to it by the diarist, in 1835), is now the capital of Columbiana county, Ohio. It has 6 churches, a number of small mills and factories, and issues three weekly papers.— Ed.

*Sept. 12 th* . We passed over the ridge through which the Sandy & Beaver Canal is to pass by a tunnel about 90 feet below the road, near Hanover. In digging the Canal near this town (Hanover) the workman found most of the bones of a mammoth of the largest size ever yet found. The Rev. Alcimus Young measured the teeth, the Jaw & several other bones; and allowing the proportions to be the same as those of the ox or cow, this animal must have been [blank in MS.] feet long.

We passed down the beautiful valley of Sandy cr[ee]k now containing several thriving villages, growing upon the line of the Canal, & reached Judge [blank in MS.] at Sandyville, where we spent the Sabbath, each preaching once to the people.

*Sept. 14 th Monday:* Passing through New Phil a . we dined at Gnattenhuten. This place is rendered famous in the history of Missions, from its being the site of an old Moravian

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Indian Mission, & the place where 92 pious Indians were inhumanly murdered, by a marauding party of whites, under the command of Col. Williams, in March 1782.<sup>2</sup> After

2 Gnadenhütten and Schönbrunn were two villages built for Christian Indians in 1772, by the Moravian missionaries Zeisberger and Heckewelder. They were both on the west bank of the Tuscarawas River, the former in the outskirts of the present white town of that name, in Clay township, and the latter higher up, about three miles southeast of the present New Philadelphia, in what now is Goshen township, Tuscarawas County, O. Details of this shocking massacre,—in which ninety peaceful Indian converts (29 men, 27 women, and 34 children) were slaughtered like cattle, by being knocked in the head with a cooper's mallet,—may be found in Withers's *Chronicles of Border Warfare* (Cincinnati, 1895 ed.), pp. 319–327. The leader of the marauding expedition was David Williamson, colonel of one of the militia battalions of Washington County, Pa.— Ed.

269 dinner we walked over the ground on which their village stood, & surveyed, with mournful reflections, the remains of their dwellings & the spot so ignobly stained by the, blood of *American Martyrs* . The holes of their cellars are yet visible & the width & course of the streets can be traced out, but nature seeming to be ashamed of this act of worse than Savage cruelty, has caused a thick growth of under brush, plumb trees & some stately oaks to hide it from the view of the present traveller.

Viewing this consecrated spot of earth with the eye of a Missionary, bound too, to the same race of aborigines, & having just before read the history of their Missions among these natives, in which a detailed account of this circumstance is given, I felt like stepping light upon the ashes of those Saints of God. We found corn which was burnt at the time, with the houses, & being in a charcoal, it had not decayed. We took several carnels, a few of which I intend to deposit in Museum of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.

We reached a tavern 4 miles from Coshockton, at the foot of a high & rough hill, some time after dark, & were obliged to stay with a drunken Land Lord. On his premises were strong sytoms of *silver ore* .

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*Sept. 15.* We passed down the valley of the Muskingum, which, including that of the Tuscarawes, contains some of the best land in the State of Ohio. We dined at Dresden & lodged at Sister Thompsons between Irvill & Newark.

*16 th .* Stopped in Newark, & held a Missionary meeting, but, notwithstanding we had a larger congregation than in New Lisbon, the collection was but about half as much.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Newark is now a place of about 3,000 inhabitants.— Ed.

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*17 th .* We reached Reynoldsburgh, on the National Road. Here my two youngest brothers live, one of whom I had not seen for 19 years, & the other but once in that length of time. In this neighborhood I have a sister whom I had not seen in 19 years, & an other whom I had not seen in 27 years. It would seem as if nature would lose its endearing tie or forget its kindred feeling in that length of time: but this was not the case. And a visit of a few days amply restored the affections of nature to their wonted strength, from the dilepation which time may have made.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Referring to this reunion, in his *Western Pioneer*, vol. ii, p. 28, Mr. Brunson says: "Our meetings were pleasant, of course, but nothing peculiar or different from that of other folks."— Ed.

*Sept. 20. Sabbath.* Preached twice in Columbus, O.<sup>2</sup> & lifted a collection for Missions of \$26.62.

<sup>2</sup> Columbus was then a city (it had been incorporated in 1834) of about 3,000 inhabitants, and rapidly growing.— Ed.

*21 st .* Left columbus, & in about 5 miles lost my saddle baggs, which, from the roughness of road, were jolted out of the wagon behind; but did not discover the loss till 13 miles after. Bro. Weigley took another horse, leaving ours to rest, & went back for them. A

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traveller had found them & carried them back to Columbus, where they were obtained. It would have been a serious loss, not to have recovered them. They contained most of my money, and valuable papers, & all my change of clothing I had with me. He returned with them 10 oclock at night.

*Sept. 22.* Soon after we started, we broke our double tree, in a mud hole. This we mended with a with[e] & a pole which we cut with our hatchet, & drove 300 miles with it, before we could conveniently get a new one. The roads through Ohio & Indiana were extreemly bad.

Passing through Springfield, we lodged at an inn 7 miles a head.

*23 d .* Passing through Dayton, we reached Alexander.

*24 th .* Went through Eaton, & several little towns, & reached Milton, Indiana, some time after dark. The country & the people began to assume a rougher appearance than they before had done.

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*25 th .* We got on to the National Road, then building, but the late rains & immense travell, made the road intolerable. Some times we were obliged to take the woods to escape the mud, & even there travellers often got stuck fast. The tide of emigration is very great. We pass from 10 to 30 moving wagons a day, with droves of cattle & sheep, mostly going to Illinos. Lodged in Greenfield.

*26 th .* Passed through Indianapolis, the capital of Indiana. and reached Belleville, where we spent the Sabbath, each preaching once, & taking up a small collection for Missions.

*28 th .* Going through Greencastle, we lodged at a farm house where they took all the feed from our horses, after we went to bed.<sup>1</sup>

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1 *Western Pioneer*, ii, pp. 28–30. The host, Brunson thought, seeing that their guests were preachers, expected no pay; so made only a feint at entertaining their horses.— Ed.

29 *th* . We reached Clinton, on the Wabash, & lodged with a friend. Here my new horse had become so lame, & stiff with the scratches, that I was obliged to exchange again. I this night took a severe cold, with which I was afflicted for several weeks.

30. Through Paris, Ill. & onto the grand Prairie where it was 15 miles to the first house. This is one of the most delightful views in the world. I had often heard tell of these Prairies. I had seen them, tho' small, in Ohio & Michigan, but the half had never been told me. Except the few wet places which carry off the water, it affords the best natural road I ever saw, and when these “wets” are bridged & the road through them turnpiked they will exceed any road in the world, having no more work done to them.

We reached a cabin, with 3 moving wagons, containing 27 persons. The cabin was not over 18 feet square, with a bed room attached to it, & in & about it 40 persons lodged that night.

*Oct. 1.* Travilled 15 miles to the first house, where we took breakfast—15 miles to the next, then 23 miles further, making 53 miles. But this was too much for Bro. Weigleys horse, after having travelled so far. He gave out.

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*Oct. 2 d* . Reached Springfield,<sup>1</sup> Sangamon co. Illinois, and found the conf. 2 days in session. We were much fatigued, having travelled 630 miles in about 3 weeks.

1 At this time Springfield was a town with perhaps 1,500 inhabitants, and the largest settlement in Illinois, except Jacksonville, which claimed 1,600.—Cf. Moses's *Illinois* (Chicago, 1889), p. 431. It was not selected as the capital of the state until 1837.— Ed.

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3 d . Went into conf. presented our transfers & were introduced to the conf. by Bishop Roberts.<sup>2</sup> Here we met Brethren Mack, Hitchcock, & Whitney who had transferred from Pittsburgh. The sight of old acquaintances & friends, in this distant land, was cheering to our spirits. Some of the members I also had seen at Gen. Conf. in Phil a . in 1832; otherwise they were strangers, but I soon found they were brethren, & engaged in the same common cause.

2 Robert Richford Roberts, born 1778, died 1843.— Ed.

*Oct. 4 th* . Sabbath. Heard several excellent sermons, witnessed the ordinations, & preached at night, & concluded by calling up 8 or 10 mourners to the alter for prayers.

*5 th* . The conference Missionary Society held its anniversary. "Theophilus Armenius" & myself were the speakers. But such is the excentricity of that remarkable genius, that it is impossible to follow him in a speech with any degree of satisfaction. He ranged the world from its creation to its end, & talked, in broken fragments, a little about every thing connected with the spread of the gospel. *He* had the attention of the people, but it was hard to get that attention after he had done. The meeting, however turned off in good stile. The cause of Missions is begining to be appreciated in every part of the church.

6. I had intended to keep clear of committee business, if posible, at this conf. having had my part in Pittsburgh. But before I was aware, I was on three or 4 committees, as was usual in my old conf. And before conf. rose I had 4 written reports in my hands at once ready to be presented.

*7 th* . crowded yet more with committee business, growing out of a difficulty between two preachers, but succeding in getting a reconciliation between them, we were discharged from further trouble about it.

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8<sup>th</sup>. Bishop tho't best to give me charge of *Galena Mission Dist*.<sup>1</sup> in connection with my mission to the Indians. The Dist. lies on the extreem of the white settlements, within which my family must be located, & contains only 5 appointments. This would occupy but 5 weeks out of 13 to attend to their quarterly meetings, & leave 8 to explore the Indian country.

<sup>1</sup> "A district," says Brunson in *Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 31, "extending from Rock Island to St. Anthony's Falls, five hundred miles long, including all the settlements on both sides of the Mississippi River, and about. seventy miles wide. Dubuque, however, was the only settlement west of the river."— Ed.

9, & 10. Rested, & wrote letters.

11. *Sabbath*. —Preached to a large & attentive congregation.

Oct. 12. Started for Galena, to which Bro. Weigley was appointed.<sup>2</sup> But we soon found that his mare could not travel so far as to do us, & at 18 miles we stopped at a friends & he exchanged horses.

<sup>2</sup> Later, Weigley became a member of the Galena bar.— Ed.

13<sup>th</sup>. Travelled 43 miles through a beautiful Prairie country, & lodged with a half backslidden professor.

14. Reached the Illinois River at Peoria. In reaching the river we decended hills, from the common levil of the Prairie, which were about 500 feet above the levil of the river. After the discent, we passed over a rich river bottom covered with wood, but the crops on the cleared fields did not look as bountiful, as they did on the Prairie land. The Prairie, therefore, appeared to be richer than the river bottoms.

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We ferried the river, at the outlet or mouth of Illinois Lake, where the River is narrower than at any other point from the Rapids to the mouth, being only about 150 yards wide. A company is incorporated to build a bridge here. This town will no doubt be a place of great business,<sup>3</sup> but, at present there is the most shaving, the highest prices, & the least accomodations of any place of the size I was ever in. We had travelled 50 miles to get to a blacksmith, 19

3 Now a city of about 50,000 inhabitants.— Ed.

274 to shew Bro. Weigley's horse, but of two smith, nothing could be done for us. We had to travel 24 miles farther, crooking about, to two smiths more, & finally got it done at Chillicothe, 18 miles up the River, or at the head of Ill. Lake.

At this place (Peoria) I saw a new patent hard mill. The stones were 2 feet in diamiter, the upper one 15 inches thick, & both went, but contrary ways, by the same crank & cog wheel. The spindle was hollow, one working inside of the other like the posts of a watch or clock. The whole frame, including hopper, box, stones & all did not occupy more than about 5 feet square & as many high. A very little water power would turn it, as it could be turned by hand to grind considerably fast.

South & east of this River the Prairie country is generally level, or nearly so. But north of this, it assumes a more rolling or undulating form. South of it, the country affords but few stone. In the banks of the large streams are some times found quarries, about 100 feet below the common level of the country. But upon the plains no stone are visible, except here and there a primitive rock, called in this country "lost rock:" There are on an average about one to a 100 or 160 acres, & are supposed to have been thrown here by the action of the water in the deluge. Stone coal is abundant on this River, & by a slip of the bank, a little above Chillicothe, a stratum of coal was laid bare, 36 feet in depth; an other 6 feet in depth.

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South of this River the Streams of water are sluggish, & very few mill seats can be found. But north of it the land becoming rolling the water falls more than below, & mill seats become more plenty.

At this place we entered the scene of the Indian, or Black Hawk war, of 1832. The stockades & forts were yet visible. The one at this place was called fort Clark. The Potewattimies were just on the move for their new home west of the Mississippi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By treaty concluded at Chicago, Sept, 26, 1833, the united nation of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawattomie Indians ceded their lands along the west shore of Lake Michigan, and agreed to move to a reservation of five million acres on the Missouri River. It took several years to effect the removal.— Ed.

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*Oct. 15.* Left Elbow creek where we lodged, after breakfast, & travelled 20 miles to the first house. The road led over a beautiful roiling Prairie. Here we stoped & fed our selves & beast. At table we had 4 Presbyterian preachers who had been to a camp meeting, with several of their friends. I expressed a little surprise that *they* should hold camp meetings! “Why,” said one of them “Camp Meetings began with us, & I should be sorry to lose or give them up now.” They said that about 30 professed to obtain religion.—We paid \$1.00 for our dinners & horse feed. Two of us.

We went from this to Beauror Robinsons River, & through Princeton, & to *Dad Joe Smiths* that night 35 miles further, making 55 that day. The last 12 miles we travelled after sundown, & by fire light over Prairie, it being on fire. This was the grandest scene I ever saw, the wind blew a gale all day, the grass was dry, & the fire being in the Prairie, at a distance, where we entered it some men were kindling fire to burn it away from their fences & then let it run—no odds who it burnt up. As the dark came on, the fire shone more brilliant. A cloud of smoke arose on which the fire below shone, & the reflection could be seen for miles—in some instances 40. We passed 3 different fires in this 12 miles,

having to turn out & get round them when they reached the road. The wind blew across our road, & the *long* ways of the fire was with the wind, in which direction it went nearly as fast as the wind. But when a streak was run, in the direction of the wind, then the fire worked side ways. By this means we had in view at one time from one to 5 miles of fire in a streak, burning from 2 to 6 feet high. In *high* grass it sometimes burns 30 feet high, if driven by fierce winds. By the light of this fire we could read fine print for a mile or more. And the light reflected from the cloud of smoke, enlightened our road for miles after the blaze of the fire was out of sight.

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Till I saw this, I could never so well understand one part of the scripture. The cloud which overspread the camp of Israel & kept off the rays of the sun by day, was *a pillar of fire by night*. It was literally so with the smoke which rose from these fires. By day the cloud was often so dense & so great, as to hide the sun from the view of the traveller, but by night this same cloud would reflect the light which shone on it from below, so as to enlighten the country for miles around it. The reason why the cloud over the camp of Israel gave light, was, because the glory of God, which rested in the tabernacle, shone upon it.

Before we reached our lodgings, Bro. Weigleys horse gave out & attempted to lie down, apparently with the cholic, tho' probably from fatigue. We had to walk him about 4 miles, —Weigley on foot by his side. When we reached the place the people were in bed. She got up, however, & gave us some supper.

*Oct. 16.* We were obliged to take it more moderate, on account of the sick horse. We passed more burning Prairies, & large quantities of lost or primitive Rock scattered over the Prairies. And where they were burnt they could be more easily discerned.

We left the most beaten road, to take a new one, said to be much nearer than the old one. We crossed Rock River at Bushes ferry, 5 miles below Dixon's, but we paid dear for our saving. It was with difficulty we got any thing to eat our selves, but could get nothing but

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Prairie hay & pumpkins for our horses. It began to rain on us, & at length blew a gale. Dark came on before we reached a house. At length we reached a Hixite quakers, where we fared very well our selves, but our horses had no stable or shed to break off the storm & nothing but Prairie hay to eat.

*Oct 17 th* . We started with the break of day, & travelled 6 miles before we could get any grain for our horses, or breakfast for our selves. We passed through one of the most beautiful groves, this morning, we had seen in all the Prairie country. It was 6 miles thro' it, & composed of 277 young thrifty timber, on the waters of Elkhorn creek (Dogs head on the Map.)

Here we learned a little of the ways of settling this new country.<sup>1</sup> The lands had been surveyed into townships, but not into sections, & of course not yet in Market. About 40 families had settled themselves about this grove. They had, in the absence of all other law, met & made a law for themselves. They have surveyed the township & ascertained that section 16, the school section, was within the grove, & they staked it off & appointed commissioners to take care of it, preserve the timber &c. so as to make it valuable as possible when the township should be regularly settled according to law. They had also meted & bounded every mans *wood land* , allowing each family 40 acres of timber, & as much Prairie as he pleased to take up. Timber being the great disideratum of the country, they would not allow any one man to monopolise. Forty acres was thought to be sufficient timber land, to make & sustain the fence, buildings & fires of a farm.

<sup>1</sup> *In Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 33, the author says: "At Elkhorn Grove we stopped for breakfast, before taking a twelve-mile prairie, at what we afterwards found to be a backslidden deacon's. We did not think it necessary to announce our profession for so short a stay and from not seeing any thing like religion about the premises. Being curious to know how the settlers managed to secure their lands when they came into market, all being now 'squatters,' we asked many questions."— Ed.

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As this land was not in market at the time, & the pre-emption law having run out, we asked what security they had, that speculators would not buy their lands & improvements, or make them pay what their own improvements were worth? The reply was, that there was an understanding in the country, equivalent to a law of the land, that the settlers should sustain each other against the speculator, & no settler should bid on another's land.

If a speculator should bid on a settler's farm, he was knocked down & dragged out of the office, & if the striker was prosecuted & fined, the settlers paid the expense by common consent among themselves. But before a fine could be assessed, the case must come before a jury, which of course must be selected from among the settlers. And it was understood that no jury would find a verdict of *guilty* against a settler, in such a case, because it was considered a case of *self defence*. And if these means could not protect the settler, the last resort would be to "burn powder in their faces." These things being understood no speculator dare bid on a settler's land, & as no settler would bid on his neighbor, each man gets his land at congress price, \$1.25 pr. acre.

We this day reached *Apple River*, at Bro. Jewels. Here was a fort in the late Indian War, (1832) made & defended by the inhabitants. About 200 Indians under Black Hawk attacked this fort, defended by about 40 men & boys, besides a few women. A Mrs. Armstrong<sup>1</sup> assumed the command. She had some women making cartridges, others loading guns for the men to fire, while she drove round the fort like a fury, cursing & swearing like a pirate. She had all the children drove into one room & one woman, with a club in hand, appointed to guard them, with strict orders [to] keep them from crying, lest the Indians should think they were frightened, & should thereby be encouraged.

<sup>1</sup> In *Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 35, Brunson gives the name as Mrs. Graham. In the account in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, v, pp. 288, 289, the woman is referred to as Mrs. Elizabeth Armstrong. Apple River was a lead-miners' camp, near the present village of Elizabeth, Jo Daviess

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County, Ill. The attack by Black Hawk and some 200 of his followers occurred April 6, 1832.— Ed.

The Indians heard her hallooing at the men, & knowing her voice, said afterwards that she was *very mad*. The Indians were defeated with considerable loss, while but one man was killed & one wounded in the fort. And both these men were shot when gratifying their curiosity by looking over the pickets. The bravery of this woman is allowed, by some, to have saved the fort. But it is a great drawback upon her credit, being so profane.

*Sunday Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>*. Bro. Weigley was sick & took [to] his bed. He had taken some cold, & seemed to sink under the 279 fatigues of the journey. I preached twice to a small, but very attentive congregation.

In going to the school house, in which we met, I passed the grave [of] Bro. [blank in MS.] Luggs,<sup>1</sup> the young man who travelled the Buffalo Grove Mission last year, & died at this place. A decent paling enclosed the little spot of earth where his mortal remains were laid, raised by the hand of [a] stranger. This lonely spot, among the holes dug for lead mineral, a few rods from the fort above named, has solemn appearance to a missionary, near a 1000 miles from home. I know no difference between a grave in the wilderness of America & one in Africa, or in Asia. He died at his post, some 100 [1000] of miles from his father's house, mostly among strangers, but who were kind to him, & who, it is hoped will meet him in a better world. The sight of his grave, was a source of serious reflection.

<sup>1</sup> In *Western Pioneer*, ii, pp. 34, 35, the author gives the name as Lemuel A. Sugg.— Ed.

*Oct. 19*. Being detained by the sickness of Bro. Weigley I spent part of the day in viewing the mineral grounds. An extensive tract of country, here, affords the richest lead ore in the world. It yields about 70 pr. ct. or 70 pounds of lead for a 100 of ore; & there appears to be no end to it in the bowels of the earth. It is found mostly in crevices of the rock, from 10 to 150 feet below the surface of the ground. Holes are dug from the surface to the rock, which is usually 10 or 15 feet, & if no crevice is found, they dig another, & so on till they

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strike a crevice. But every crevice has not lead in it. They keep digging therefore till they find one that has, & then follow it. The crevices usually run from east to west, or from north to south. A Crevice with lead in is called a *lead*, & when discovered is followed by *drifting* after it. And many holes may be dug to the same lead, so as to raise the mineral at different points. These crevices are sometimes 10 feet wide. Then they contract to a few inches when they must be blown with powder, to get room to work in them. Their usual width is from 1½ to 3 feet. Many who dig for this ore barely make a living by it. Some are fortunate enough to find a rich *lead* & make a fortune at once, but this number is very small, compared to the whole. The most who work the mines make well by it.

These mines being rich, are a source of wealth to the country. The lead taken away, more than pays for the goods & provisions brought back, so that the country is full of money & becoming wealthy. Farmers are much needed to supply the miners with provisions, which when done will save their price to the country & of course increase its wealth in the same proportion, for at present the most of the provisions consumed, are brought up the Mississippi River, from Missouri & Illinois. Farmers are, however, coming in fast, now.

20. We rode into Galena, about 14 miles, over a rough hilly road. This is a place of great business, about 1,200 inhabitants. It is situated on a hill side on Fever River about 7 miles from the mouth. there are two streets in the town, too narrow to admit of teams passing with convenience, & one so much higher than the other that the people on the upper street can look into the chimneys of those on the lower street. The side hill is but a mass of rock, & admits of no gardens worth any thing.

The people are mostly intelligent, enterprising & healthy but too much absorbed in the cares of the world to think of religion. They came here to make a fortune, & to leave, but have since concluded to stay here. On the opposite side of the river is better ground for a town, & ½ a mile back of it on the hill commences a beautiful Prairie, to which the town must ultimately extend. The trade of this Mineral district occupies 6 or 8 steamboats, which ply constantly between St. Louis & Galena, Dubuque & Prairie du Chien.

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Our introduction to Galena was rather forbidding. We could find no home but a tavern, the bills of which are equal to the Atlantic cities. I preached at night to a small congregation in our chappel, the building is small, 26 feet 281 by 30, has a fine bell & is occupied as a school house, for the present.

21. A methodist family invited us to lodge with them. I got my waggon into a barn & my harness into a loft to winter, while I took the road on horseback. In the course of the day I viewed the place & found some acquaintences, one of which was with Rev. Mr Kent of the Presbyterian church.<sup>1</sup> He is the only preacher of his order in the mining country. He is very catholic & friendly in his views & feelings, & evinces a great warmth of piety. I preached for him at night, to a less congregation than we had, the night before, in our own church. Our respective churches are about of a size, say 30 members each, but his includes all the members of his church in the mines, while ours extends but little out of the town. Within the bounds of country including his members, we have one or two hundred.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Aratus Kent was born at Suffield, Conn., Jan. 15, 1794, and graduated from Yale in 1816. After serving pulpits in the East, he was, in March, 1829, assigned to Galena by the American Home Missionary Society; having previously asked the Society "for a place so hard that no one else would take it." He organized at Galena the first Presbyterian church in the lead mines, and there labored zealously until December, 1848, when he withdrew to other fields. He died November 8, 1869. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xiv, p. 93, for account of his visit in 1833, to Fort Winnebago.— Ed.

22. Left Galena for the north in a sleet storm. It soon covered me with ice. My umberell became too heavy to carry, but too much frozen to let down. I was obliged, therefore, to call at a house & thaw it before I could fold it up. I then took the storm in the face, & before I reached a stepping place, I had at least 20 lbs of ice hanging to me & my horse. About 3 oclock P.M. I arrived at Major [John H.] Rountrees, Plattville, in the Wisconsin Teritory,

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having rode in & out of my way about 30 miles. The Major was not at home, but his wife,<sup>2</sup> the daughter of a Methodist preacher, knows how to take care of preachers.

<sup>2</sup> Rountree, who settled at Platteville in 1827, married Miss Grace Mitchell, Aug. 7, 1828. Mrs. Rountree's brother (not father) was Rev. John T. Mitchell, a pioneer preacher on the Galena mission. Mrs. Rountree died Oct. 16, 1837.— Ed.

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I found it a home for the pilgrim Missionary. A young gentleman by the name of Gridley, on a visit at the house, kindly assisted me in getting off my over coat, & thawing the ice from my clothes, hat, saddle, &c. I staid here several days, till the storm was over. The ground was covered with ice for several days. This was rather a gloomy introduction to this country, but I was assured that the like was never seen here before. It was the worst storm I ever rode in, & cakes of ice were formed on me, near half an inch thick.

25. *Sunday*. Preached to a small congregation. The people here seemed to be very hungry for the word of life. The preacher appointed to this mission last year, was accused of an attempt at a rape, & was arrested by the civil authorities, & held to bail for trial. As might be expected every suspicious eye began to see suspicious things, that were past. And so, many more things were reported on him of the same character. Of all of which I shall speak, after his trial.<sup>1</sup> Owing to this circumstance, the mission circuit was left without preaching, as no other one could be gotten to supply it, & as a consequence, when the shepherd was gone, the sheep went a stray, & all things were in a state of moral desolation.

<sup>1</sup> "For a while," said the author in his *Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 38, "he succeeded in deceiving me, and I aided him in getting clear of the charge; but subsequent developments convinced me of his guilt, the stain of which hung to him for life. On his death-bed he repented, and professed to obtain pardon from God."— Ed.

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27. Started for the north. And after travelling about 16 miles in a N. W. direction, I reached Aaron Boyce's. Here I fell in company with Sir Augustus Charles Murry, a Scotch nobleman, who was spending his time on this frontier, partly for the sport of hunting, & partly to learn the character of the Indians, from actual observation. He spent the season of the summer hunt, with the Pawnees on the frontier of Mexico, seeking Buffalo.

Seeing this intilgent & well educated young man, spend his time, brook the difficulties & dangers of such a life, 283 and for no higher motive than the gratification of his curiosity & passion for sport, I felt ashamed before God, that I had so long held back from a mission among the Indians in order to *save souls* .<sup>1</sup>

1 *Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 38:—"I slept in a cabin chamber with Sir Charles Murray, Queen Victoria's chamberlain, then selecting lands to, enter in this country. He yet [1879] owns large tracts in Grant County, Wisconsin, but after paying taxes for thirty years it is doubtful whether his lands would sell for their cost and the interest on it."— Ed.

28 *th* . To save 12 miles in 32, I took a new road to the Wisconsin, for 14 miles. I travelled a bridle path when in the woods, but when in the Prairie, which was most of the way, I had to travel with or without a trail, as it happened. I made out to hit upon the fords of the streams except the last before I reached the Military road, but there being a farm in sight, when on the hills, I found but little difficulty in getting along to the house. Here I fed myself, but could get nothing but Prairie hay & pumpkins for my horse, of which he did not eat much. In this neighbor hood were 6 families, recently settled, but the gospel had never yet reached any of their dwellings.

From this to the Wisconsin, 6 miles, & from thence to Prairie du Chien, 6 miles more, I travelled the new Military road, which leads from the Prairie to fort Winnebago, at the portage between the Wisconsin & the Fox River of Green Bay. This road is new & pretty good.

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The wisconsin at the ferry is about half a mile wide including the Islands & Slews or buyo's, but if all the water run in one channel, it probably would not be over 80 or 100 rods. I saw no place in this or the Mississippi River, that I could see straight across it for Islands or strips of land, with Slews, channels or pools behind them. In consequence of these Islands, the beds of these Rivers are wider, & the channel more difficult to find than they otherwise would be. The sand which lies in the bed of the Wisconsin moves by the influence of the current so that the channel is often changed, & rendered difficult for navigation.

Just about sun down I reached the house of Bro. Samuel 284 Gilbert, Prairie du Chien. This good brother & his wife were methodists in Kentucky, but there being no church of their own in the place, they had joined the Cumberland Presbyterians, under the Ministry of the Rev. David Lowry.<sup>1</sup> As I announced my name & business at the gate Bro. Gilbert & his wife met me with a smile, & welcomed me to their dwelling. I had some fears on the road. as to the reception I should meet with, not knowing the changes that time might have produced, but these fears soon vanished, when I was hailed as the messenger of God.

<sup>1</sup> See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii, p. 405, *note*, for biographical sketch of Lowry.— Ed.

This Prairie was settled by the French traders more than a century ago. The settlers have mixed with the Indians, till about one fourth of them are of mixed blood. They are \* \* \* the most of [them] ignovent as their savage neighbors, & no more improved in any way, except in their dress, they live in a poor kind of houses, & some of them make some little essay at farming. A small portion of them are wealthy, educated for business, & hold a respectable standing in the world: but *professing* no more religion than the others.

The Prairie is 9 miles long & varying from one to two miles in width. It lies on the east of the Mississippi River, & north of the mouth of the Wisconsin. The high bluffs which rise and bound it on the east are 3 or 400 feet high, covered mostly with Prairie grass, having a

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little timber & on their peaks or points presenting cragged precipices of rock peculiar to the mineral country.

The Settlement extends the whole length of the Prairie, & congress has granted to each original settler a patent for his claim, or settlement right. About midway, north & south, is the village, which contains perhaps 100 houses of all discriptions. The whole French & mixed population are about 600, the American 200 & the garrison contains 250 men, but their wives and children, & other attendents amount to about 150 more: makeing the population of the place, including all discriptions about 1200. The garrison 285 is built of stone, & situated at the south end of the village, commanding the river on one side & the Prairie on the other.

I was the first Methodist preacher who ever trod this soil, but even here I found friends, yes *warm* friends. I soon extended my acquaintence to a small circle of the American population, a few of whom are really pious. Bro. Lowry, who has charge of the Winnebago school nine miles above the Prairie, & preaches in town once in two weeks, & Bro. [Ezekiel] Tainter another of his members, seemed to be *my own* brethren. And I must say, I never enjoyed myself better among methodists in my life. Indeed, on the frontier, we seem to be out of the reach of the sectarian bickerings of the city & older settled countries. The spirit of missions is a *catholic* spirit. And as this spirit is the harbinger of the Millenial glory of the church, we see in its effects, both in savage & civilized lands, the character of that glorious age or dispensation, when "the watchmen shall see eye to eye."

I preached on thursday night to about 8 persons more than the family—on friday night to 15 to 20 more than the family. On Sabbath Nov. 1 I preached in the new court house, which was opened for the first time for any use, to about 100 hearers, & at night to 150.

At first sight of the Rivers at this place it looks like a, sickly country. The water is darkened with the small particles of rich soil which float in it, yet it is not riley or muddy. The Islands are subject to inundations, covered with heavy grass & some of them half under water at

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all times, forming extensive marshes or swamps. But all these unhealthy appearances are counteracted by other laws. This country exceeds all others I ever saw *for springs* . All the little streams are made entirely of springs. Their waters are clear as christial & are very uniform in their depth, seldom being swelled over their banks which are uncommonly low. And these Islands, being made of sand, & not quag mires, & being full of springs of exelent water, very little sickness is experienced on their account.

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Here I intend, if Providence permit, to locate my family, & I purchased about 100 acres of the Prairie for a farm, for \$700.

Nov. 2. Monday, left the Prairie, Bro. Tainter accompanying me [to] the Wisconsin ferry & paying my ferriage, 6 miles, & rode to Cassville, about 30 miles, & preached to near 100 people at night. This village was but just laid out tho' the map represents it as a large place. It has one of the best sites for a town the river bank affords in this region & will no doubt make a place of considerable business. My road to day was over a variagated country. Near the Wisconsin River is hilly, covered with timber & abounding in stone quarries & lead mineral. After climbing the hills I had a most lovely road over a beautiful Prarie, following a ridge the most of the way, with here & thare a flourishing farm.

Nov. 3. I went to Boyce Prairie, and preached at Aaron Boyces, 20 miles, & then to Jo s Boyce 6 miles & preached at night. My congregations were small, the population being sparce. At Aaron Boyces has since been laid out a town for the county seat of Grant county.<sup>1</sup> I this day crossed Grant River & several of its branches, all formed by the most beautiful springs I ever saw, & affording the purest of water, & the best of mill seats. The hills abound with stone & mineral. On some of the streams I saw evidence of stone coal.

<sup>1</sup> The plat of Lancaster was recorded May 1, 1837.— Ed.

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Nov. 4. Rested & got some washing done, which I found difficult to obtain in this country, on account of the scarcity of female help.

Nov. 5. Rode to Plattville, 12 miles, crossing the two main branches of Platt. The first is like Grant, about 20 yards wide at the ford, & the second about 10 yds. abounding in pure spring water & the best of mill seats. The country on this road is hilly, covered with oak timber & well stored with mineral.

Nov. 7. Rode to Galena, 25 miles, & began a quarterly meeting for this Mission, which continued the next day, 287 being Sabbath. This was the first qr. meeting I held in the Western country. There were but 25 members in the church, tho' on Sabbath we have 200 in the congregation, who gave us 21 dolls. in the collection. The State of religion here, as in the rest of the dist. was at its lowest ebb. The year before one preacher had died, Francis Asbury Luggs,<sup>1</sup> who was appointed to Buffalo Grove Mission, Nichols S. Bastion, appointed to Dubuque Mission failed in his health so as to be unable to preach, & \* \* \* appointed to Iowa Mission was accused of an attempt at a rape. This left only Hooper Crews the P[re]siding E[lder] & stationed in Galena to supply the *four* charges. And tho' he labored excessively, & travelled when in danger of freezing in the winter, it was impossible for him to sustain the work.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 279, *note*.— Ed.

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Under these circumstances, infidelity triumphed, & religion had but a nominal existence. Add to this, the spirit of money making seemed to absorb the whole community. Money was made with the greatest facility, & spent with greatest profusion; & as a matter of course, gambling, drunkenness, &c, were the common order of the day, with the majority. The population contained a good share of intelligence & more than ordinary share of enterprise, such as would naturally be attracted by the immense wealth of the mines. But

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coming to the country to make fortunes, Religion, with the great majority, occupied little or no place in their thoughts. But nothing can be more certain in the world of morals, than that if religion gains the assendency, (which may heaven grant to be the case) so that the wealth & intelligence of the country are sanctified to the service of God, it will be one of the most wealthy & useful parts of our globe: the soil being of the best quality, & the health being of the highest grade.

Nov. 12. Left Galena & rode to Dubuque, & held a quarterly meeting for this mission on 14 & 15. Here I found, as in galena, a small church with about 25 members. The 288 town is located on a sand Prairie adjoining the hill but is of difficult access from the river, on account of the Ilands & Sloughs (slues) which abound in the Upper Mississippi, on the west bank of which this town is situated. It contains about 600 inhabitants: the most of them foreigners \* \* \* & forming the roughest & wickedest class of people I ever saw. The lead mines in its neighborhood are of the wealthiest character, and have given independent fortunes to some of the most degraded men of our species. Wealth in such hands only afford the means of grater wickedness. The lands were not in market & the only claim to it consisted of occupancy & consequently conflicting claims for valuable mineral ground frequently occured which were oftner settled by the *might* of the parties than the decisions of law. A few weeks before my arrival at this place one [of] our valuable brethren was shot dead at a mineral hole, while contending for his right, by two men, father & son by the name of Smith. They were committed to prison & indicted for the murder, the father as the principal & the son as accessory, but the settlement of the country being far ahead of the tardy movements of the government in extending the laws & the jurisdiction of the courts to it, it was found that the courts had no jurisdiction over the case & the prisnors were discharged. The people, however, feeling indignant at the offender, called a public meeting to try [the] Smiths in the true *democratic* form, & but for his escape would have hung him, as they had done one of similar character before. Smith, however, returned to the mines in the ensuing winter, & a brother of Massey who was murdered shot him down in the streets in Galena in open day, & then made his escape, no one careing to pursue him under the circumstances

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of the case. Not long after the younger Smith appeared in Dubuque & a maiden sister of Massey shot him in a store & would have killed him, but for his pocket book against which the ball of her pistol struck. Shooting & dirking were so common, however, that little notice was taken of it, unless death ensued; nor even then, if it was considered justifiable homeside. 289 Miss Massey, therefore, was not molested, but soon after left [the] country. The state of Religion as might be expected in such a country was very low. There were a few who feared God, & worshiped him in spirit & in truth.

*Nov. 16.* Rode to Menominee diggings on the east side of the River, crossing it both ways in a horse boat, in company with Bro. Morgan a local preacher, 10 miles, with whom I lodged that night.

*Nov. 17.* I started this morning for Cassville to fill an appointment I left when there before. I took the most direct road, which led by the forks of Platt where Paris now stands. But when I reached the River I found it impassable. The back water of the Mississippi over flowed the bottoms & this was frozen one or two inches thick, & the ferry boat, half full of water & ice, was frozen fast. Bro. Morgan, who accompanied me, then led me over hills & through vales, some timber & some Prairie land, up the little Platt to a *ford*. From this I found my way over a ridge of timbered land to the other Platt at Hough's mill & then to the Boyce Prairie. The snow which fell two days previous was fast melting away, so that my horse *balled*, slipped & became fatiagued, and at 3 oclock I reached Jo s. Boyce's having travelled 26 miles, & yet 26 miles from the place of destination. I therefore despaired of reaching the place & put up for the night.

*Nov. 18.* Rode to Cassville, and tho' the congregation had been disappointed the night before, a goodly number assembled to hear the word.

*Nov. 19.* Rode back to Boyce Prairie and lodged with Bro. Fluharty's.

*Nov. 20.* Rode to Plattville—Major Rountree's.

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Nov. 25. Rode to the head of Platt, to Crows & preached at night. I presume I saw 50 deer tracks in the snow in 10 miles ride.

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Nov. 26. West Platt mound. Preached at night. This mound with its mate 3 miles east of it, rises 200 feet above the common level of the country. They are each about a mile 20 290 in circumference, & mostly covered with timber. The west one has in it a cave which has been explored 1 or 200 yards, & after winter set in a rattlesnake was found crawling about as in summer. I was relating this circumstance to a lady of truth, a few days after, who informed me that she lived at a spring on the Pekatoneka a few years before, in which snakes lived the whole winter—the spring was so strong & the water so warm — If any of them ventured down stream a little they became chilled even before the water froze. I climbed to the top of this mound from which I had one of the most beautiful landscape views I ever beheld. The course of the Wisconsin about 60 miles & the Mississippi for 100 by the high ridge on the opposite sides of them. These ridges with one south & east of Bean or Fever river forms an Amphitheatre of a triangular form of about 60 miles in diameter, with these Mounds nearly in the centre, from which the most of the country could be seen, interspersed with groves of timber and beautiful & rich Prairie.

Nov. 27. Rode to Galena, & the next day to Apple River, 14 miles, & held the first quarter meeting ever held there for the Buffalo Grove Mission. The place was in sight of the old fort, distinguished for a battle in the late Black Hawk war. About 40 men women & children repelled the attack of about 200 armed savages. The women loaded the guns, run bullets, &c for the men to fire. The whites had one killed & one wounded, while some 12 or 14 of the Sacs & Foxes were shot down. But this place had more interest to me as being the place where Bro. Luggs, the last Missionary & first appointed to the mission, found his grave in the 23 d year of his age. A friend had built a neat paling round it, over which I could but shed a tear of sorrow & sympathy. I was a missionary 900 miles from my family; I could see no difference between 900 & 3,000 miles to die at from home,

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whether seperated from it by the ocean or by a western forest. My feelings were, therefore, considerably effected. I held the first love feast & administered the Lords Supper for the first time in that neighborhood.

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A few who loved the Lord enjoyed the meeting exceedingly well.

*Nov. 30 . Rode back to Galena.*

*Dec. 3 . Plattville.*

*Dec. 5 . Rode to Mineral Point. The next day being Sabbath I preached.*<sup>1</sup> This town contains about 600 inhabitants, mostly miners, & the place derived its name & wealth from the abundance of its mineral resources. It is unpleasantly situated, 3 miles from any amount of timber.

<sup>1</sup> See *History of Iowa County* (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881), p. 714, for Brunson's description of the first church in Mineral Point, and his visit thereto.— Ed.